THE HOME CIRCLE

Coronach.*

He is gone on the mountain,
  He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain
  When our need was the sorest.
The font, reappearing,
  From the raindrops shall borrow,
But to us somes no cheering,
  To Duncan to-morrow.

The hand of the reaper
  Takes the ears that are hoary;
But the voice of the weeper
  Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing
  Waft the leaves that are searest,
But one flower was in flushing
  When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,
  Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
  How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountain,
  Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
  Thou art gone, and forever!
—From Sir Walter Scott's "Lady of the Lake."

From Josh Billings' Farmers' Alminax.

I hav seen men so fond ov argument that they would dispute a guide-board at the forks ov a kuntry road, about the distance to the next town. What fools!

Thare iz plenty ov pholks in this world whose hartes bleed for the poor, but whoze pocketbooks never do.

The more rare a man's qualitys are, the more he will be found falt with—dust on a dimond iz alwus more noticeable than dust on a brik.

Intelekt without judgment iz what ails about one-half the smart people in this world.

There ain't bad luk in the whole world to ruin enny one man, not if he will fite it out on that line.

Genius seems to be the fakulty ov doing a thing excellently well, that noboddy supposed could be done at all.

Helth is lik munny—we never hav a true idea ov its value until we lose it.

I hav made up mi mind that human hapness konsists in having a good deal to do, and then keep doing it.

Mankind luv to be cheated, but they want to hav it dun bi an artist.

Falling in luv iz like falling down stairs—we never kan tell exactly how the thing waz did.

He who haz nothing to do in this world but to amuze himself, has got the hardest job on hand I kno ov.

The man whoze ambishun is simply to live iz ov no more importanse in this world than an extra rat iz.

Truth is like the burrdocks on the end ov a cow's tail—the more she shakes them oph, the less she gits rid ov them.

What men kant do they are very apt tew admire—they don't criticize a mountain because they kant make one.

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*This is No. 85 of our series of the World's Best Poems, selected especially for The Progressive Farmer by the Editor. In this series selections from the following authors have already appeared: Burns, Bryant, Mr. and Mrs. Browning, Byron, Goldsmith, Holmes, Kipling, Lanier, Longfellow, Lowell, Markham, Macaulay, Milton, Moore, Poe, Pope Read, Riley, Ryan, Scott, and others.

OUR WILD NEIGHBORS AND THEIR WINTER HOMES.

How Field Mice, Snakes and Muskrats Prepare for Cold Weather.

Tread very gently as we approach these bushes, and I will show you another interesting winter home. Do you see the cat-bird's old nest? Look at it carefully and you will notice that it is not empty, and that it has a low, dome-shaped roof on it. Shake the bush slightly, and see what happens. Aha! There comes the owner, a little yellow-brown mouse with white feet and underparts, sniffing the air with his trembling, whiskered nose, and blinking his prominent black eyes, which are nōt yet accustomed to the light. That is the white-footed mouse, or more commonly known as the deer-mouse, a dainty creature, very common throughout the country, but seldom seen except by those who go on purpose to look for him. He lives in stone-heaps, hollow trees or decaying logs, but I think he prefers a bird's old nest to any other place. When he finds one which suits him, he lines it and roofs it over with milkweed-silk, thistle-down and other soft fibrous materials, and then makes his home in it. There is a little round hole at the side which serves as a doorway. The deer-mouse does not hibernate, but leaves his nest from time to time to visit his store of hickory-nuts and cherry-pits in some hole or cranny, or to hunt for beech-nuts among the fallen leaves. In some cases a nest contains only one mouse, while in others there are three or four mice curled up together.

The snakes are retiring for the winter, too, but they make little preparation for their long sleep. They simply crawl into holes in the ground, fissures in rocks or beneath the roots of trees, and there remain in a torpid condition until the warmth of spring awakens them. Sometimes a lot of them gather in a hole some distance from the surface of the ground, roll themselves into one large ball, and thus pass the winter. Such a ball is sometimes composed of hundreds of snakes so closely interwoven as to be quite difficult to separate.

In winter-time frogs and turtles sink to the bottoms of ponds and swamps and work their way into the mud, where they remain until mild weather returns.

Muskrats, however, are now making considerable preparations for winter, and we had better go over to Blueflag Pond and see what they are about. As you know, muskrats usually live in burrows, which they dig in the banks of ponds and streams, but some of them prefer to build special houses for the winter. You may see the little builders at work on any clear night at this time of year if you have patience and are not afraid of malaria. But some of the houses are already finished, so we can see what they look like today. There are several of them in sight now—those dark mounds which stand in the shallow water—one by the bank there, and three others among the bulrushes. One, you see, is about three feet high, and four feet across at the base. It is made chiefly of tufts of moss, mud, leaves and grass, with sticks laid in between to give it strength. The walls are very thick, and inside is a little chamber, where the muskrats sleep on a bed of leaves or moss. The doorways are under the water, and the rats are obliged to dive when they wish to go in or out.

There is another house over by the farther shore which has just been begun, and it would pay to come on the first moonlight night and watch the muskrats building. We could sit under the willow-tree, and see everything without being seen. We would do well to bring our field-glasses with us, and also a waterproof coat or blanket to sit upon. I have often watched them in this way, and for the benefit of those who will not be able to come I will tell you about what would take place. For some time after reaching the willow-tree we would probably see nothing, the muskrats having heard our approaching footsteps, and sunk noiselessly into the water. But if we wait a while we would see a glittering line of light break out from the shore—the wake of a swimming muskrat in the moonlight; presently another line and another, and then the brown, furry workmen would begin pushing their way through the water, some with sticks, others with leaves, and others with moss. Up the sides of the partly finished dwelling they clamber, putting on layer after layer of the building material, which, having become wet during transportation, is soon cemented together by the frosty air. If, in our eagerness to see all that is going on, we should carelessly tread upon the dry reeds or upon a dead stick, the muskrats would slap the surface of the pond with their tails, and dive with a splash into the dancing water, and we might wait all night, perhaps, without seeing so much as the nose of one again.

But it is getting late, and we must go. Next month we shall take our first winter walk together, and see how the wild creatures are affected by the cold weather.—Ernest Harold Baynes, in Woman's Home Companion for November.

"Is Mr. Depew in?" said a life insurance agent, handing his card to the office attendant.

"I'll see, sir," replied the minion, going into the Senator's sanctum.

Mr. Depew glanced at the card and shook his head in the negative. Although the upper part of his body was hidden from public view by his desk, the Senator's legs were plainly visible as he sat with his side toward the desk.

"Mr. Depew is out," said the attendant.

"Well," said the insurance solicitor, glancing through the half-open door, "I wish you'd tell him when he comes in that I think my company would positively refuse to accept him as a first-class risk unless he will agree to always take his legs with him when he goes!"

Look for the Beautiful.

"Why, Mr. Turner," said a lady who had been looking, with the artist, at one of his wonderful landscapes; "I cannot see those things in nature."

"Don't you wish you could, madam?" inquired the artist.

The world is full of beautiful things, but very few have the power to discern them.

Fortunate is the person who has been trained to perceive beauty in everything; he possesses a heritage of which no reverses can rob him.

There are some people who, like the bee, gather honey from every flower, extracting sweetness even from a thistle, while others seem to distil bitterness from a clover blossom, a lily, or a rose. The difference between men lies in their early training or their habitual attitude of mind.

Every soul is born responsive to the beautiful, but this instinctive love of beauty must be fostered through the eye and the mind, or it will die. The craving for beauty is as strong in a child of the slums as in a favorite of fortune. "The physical hunger of the poor, the yearning of their stomachs," says Jacob A. Riis, "is not half so bitter, or so little likely to be satisfied as their aesthetic hunger, their starving for the beautiful."

A life that has been rightly trained will extract sweetness from everything; it will see beauty in all things. Every sunset, landscape, hill, mountain and tree will reveal some new charm of nature. In every patch of meadow or wood, in every leaf and flower, the trained eye will see the beautiful; the cultured ear will hear melody in the babbling brook, and harmony in the soughing winds.

There are superb personalities that go through life extracting sunshine from what to others seems but darkness, seeing charm in apparent ugliness, discerning grace and exquisite proportions where the unloving see but forbidding angles and distortion, and glimpsing the image of divinity where less beautiful souls see but a lost and degraded human being.

Yet is is a heritage possible to all who will take the trouble to begin early in life to cultivate the finer qualities of the soul, the eye, and the heart.

It is said that the most disgusting object, if put under a magnifying glass of sufficient power, would reveal beauties undreamed of; so, even in the most unlovely environment, in the most cruel conditions, there is something of the beautiful and the hopeful, when viewed through the glass of a trained and disciplined mind.

A beautiful character will make poetry out of the prosiest life, bring sunshine into the darkest home, and develop beauty and grace amid the ugliest surroundings.

It is not circumstances, so much as the attitude and quality of the mind, that give happiness, contentment, and divinity of service.—J. Lincoln Brooks, in October Success.